Washington State Department of Early Learning

Entering ECEAP Staff Qualifications in MERIT

for ECEAP lead teachers, assistant teachers, and family support staff

Overview 3

Steps To Enter ECEAP Staff Qualifications in MERIT 4

1. Create a MERIT account and obtain a STARS ID. 4
2. Gather Your Information. 4
3. Open your MERIT account. 4
4. Complete an ECEAP Staff Qualifications application in MERIT. 4
5. Mail your documentation. 4
6. Follow up. 5

Lead Teacher Qualifications 6

Assistant Teacher Qualifications 8

Family Support Staff Qualifications 10

Degrees 12

Evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credit 13

Evaluating Family Support Credit 15

Evaluating Workshop Hours for Staff Qualifications 16

Frequently Asked Questions 17

1. What education qualifies me for an education award? 17
2. What is considered an ECE major for the purpose of Education Awards 18
3. Do I need to enter individual college courses in MERIT? 18
4. Do you accept endorsements on teaching certificates from other states? 18
5. What if I've already entered my education into MERIT? 18
6. What if MERIT says I'm already "fully qualified" for my ECEAP role? 18
7. What if I was hired before July 1, 1999 and am grandfathered into an assistant teacher or family support position? 18
8. What if I was hired before July 1, 2014 and am using workshop hours as part of my ECEAP staff qualifications? 19
9. Which documents should I gather? 19
10. What if I have college credit or degrees earned outside of the US? 19
11. How do I prepare my documentation? 19
12. How do I mail my documentation? 19
13. How do I check the status of my MERIT ECEAP Staff Qualification application? 20

Overview

BY June 30, 2015, all ECEAP lead teachers, assistant teachers, and family support staff must enter the education that qualifies them for their ECEAP role into the MERIT system operated by the Department of Early Learning (DEL)

- There is a substantial education award to the individual staff member based on the education entered (unless the staff person has already received their full award).

- This replaces other methods of reporting ECEAP staff qualifications to the Department of Early Learning.

- If DEL has already determined you are fully qualified for your ECEAP position, please read the FAQ below.

Steps To Enter ECEAP Staff Qualifications in MERIT

1. **Create a MERIT account and obtain a STARS ID.**
   - If you have a STARS number, you already have a MERIT account. If so, skip this step.
   - If you are new to MERIT:
     - Register here https://apps.del.wa.gov/MERIT/Public/RegisterDEL.aspx
     - Then click the Applications tab to apply for a STARS ID
   - If you've forgotten your STARS number, click the Search MERIT tab and select "Find Professionals" or click here.
   - If you have a MERIT account, and need a STARS ID, sign into MERIT then click the Applications tab to apply for a STARS ID or click here.
   - If you have questions about how to get started in MERIT, please contact merit@del.wa.gov.

2. **Gather Your Information.**
   - Employment info: Name of ECEAP sites you've worked for, ECEAP job start and end dates.
   - College info: Names of colleges attended, your major and minor, years degrees received, course codes and dates for any courses counted toward your ECEAP staff qualifications.
   - Certificates: title, issuer, and date for any certificates, credentials or workshop hours that count either toward you Education Award or your ECEAP staff qualifications.

3. **Open your MERIT account.**
   - Sign in at https://apps.del.wa.gov/MERIT
   - Your user name is your STARS ID or the primary email address you used to create your MERIT account.
   - This page has instructions to reset your password, if necessary.

4. **Complete an ECEAP Staff Qualifications application in MERIT.**
   - Click the My Education tab.
     - If you don't have this tab, return to Step 2 and obtain a STARS ID.
   - Under "What would you like to do?" select "Enter my education and qualify for an award."
   - For "I am an ECEAP lead teacher, ECEAP assistant teacher and/or ECEAP family support staff" select YES (if true).
   - Click the blue GO button.
   - You are now on Step 1 – My Role. Follow all directions on this page, then click Next.
   - Proceed through Steps 2, 3, 4 & 5 following the directions on each page from top to bottom.

5. **Mail your documentation.**
   - After you click "Submit" on Step 5, you will receive an email with the detailed instructions for mailing documentation. The information is also in Frequently Asked

Questions below. This is required for your financial award and to start the process of verifying your ECEAP qualifications.

6. **Follow up.**
   - You will receive additional emails when your staff qualifications status is confirmed and when your financial award is on its way.
     - You will receive separate emails about your Education Award and each ECEAP role.
   - You can track the status of your application on the MERIT My Education page.

Lead Teacher Qualifications

Lead Teacher Role

The ECEAP lead teacher is directly responsible for the care and education of children and must be present during the 320 hours per year of child direct services (Section E). The lead teacher must demonstrate competency to:

- Observe and assess children's development.
- Plan children's curriculum based on child development knowledge.
- Design the learning environment.
- Implement and supervise developmentally appropriate learning activities.
- Build positive relationships with children.
- Plan guidance strategies for children.
- Involve parents.

ECEAP lead teachers must have <u>one</u> of the following:

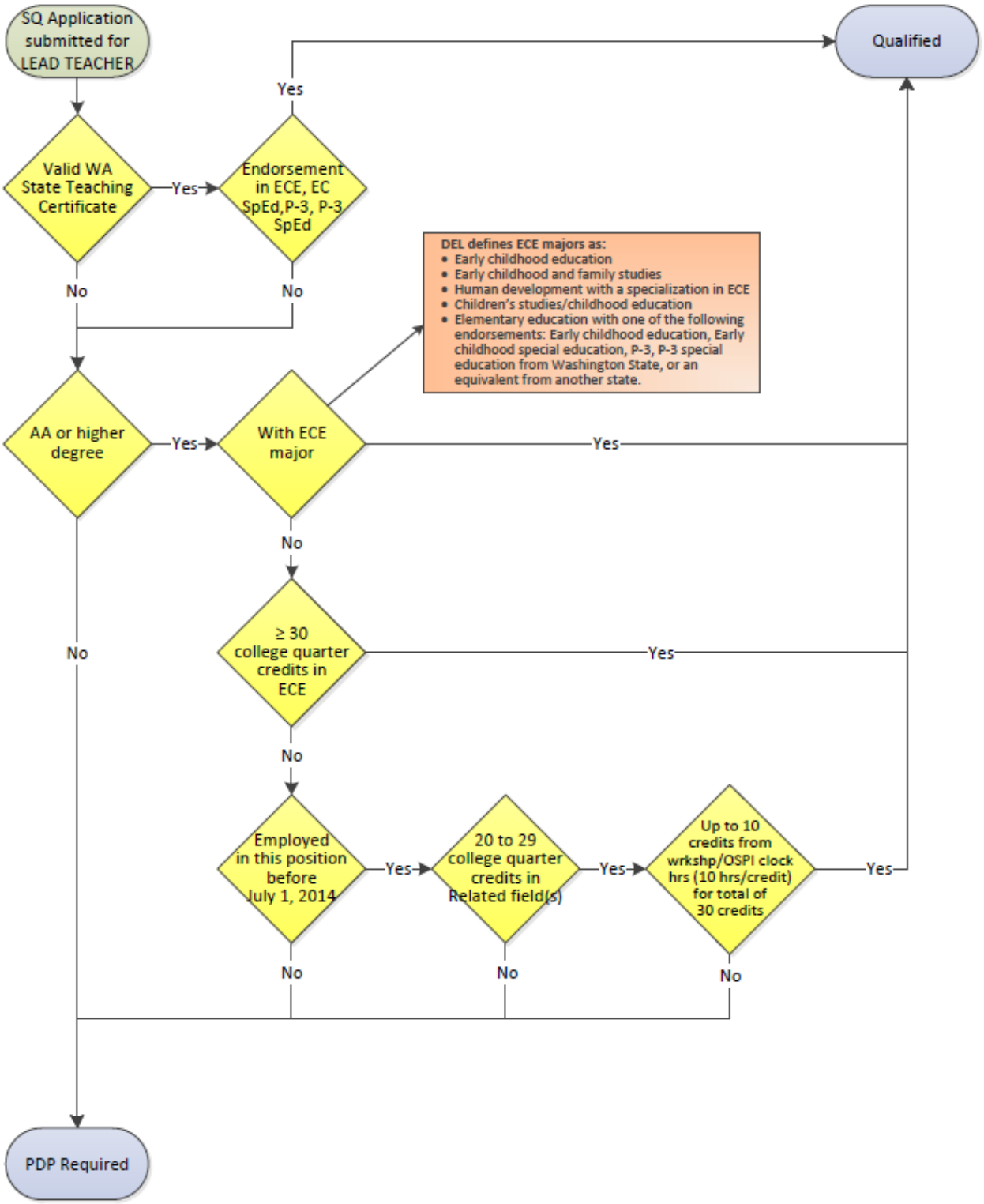
- A valid Washington State Teaching Certificate
    - With an endorsement in Early Childhood Education (Pre-K-Grade 3) or Early Childhood Special Education.
- An associate or higher degree with an ECE major, or with 30 college quarter credits in early childhood education (ECE).
    - Credits are counted according to the Evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credit section below.
    - Credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree.
- Employed as an ECEAP lead teacher before July 1, 2014 with an associate or higher degree with 20 or more college quarter credits in early childhood education and additional job-related workshop hours for a total equivalent of 30 credits.
    - For this purpose, 10 workshop hours is equivalent to one college quarter credit. Workshop hours can be State-Approved Training Hours, job related non-STARS workshop hours, job related conference workshops, or OSPI clock hours.

Notes:

- Credits are counted according to the Evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credit section below.
- Credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree.
- 1 semester credit = 1.5 quarter credits

ECEAP Staff Qualification for:

LEAD TEACHER



Revised 7/13/15

Assistant Teacher Qualifications

Assistant Teacher Role

An assistant teacher must be present during the 320 hours per year of child direct service hours, whenever there are more than ten children present or when needed to ensure a safe learning environment.

An assistant teacher demonstrates competency to implement program activities under the direction of a lead teacher.

ECEAP assistant teachers must have <u>one</u> of the following:

- Employment as an ECEAP assistant teacher in the same agency before July 1, 1999
- Washington State ECE Initial Certificate
- Washington State ECE Short Certificate of Specialization
- Washington State ECE Certificate
- A current Child Development Associate (CDA)
- The equivalent of 12 college quarter credits in early childhood education
- Employed as an ECEAP assistant teacher before July 1, 2014 with 8 or more college quarter credits in early childhood education and additional job-related workshop hours for a total equivalent of 12 credits.
    - For this purpose, 10 workshop hours is equivalent to one college quarter credit. Workshop hours can be State-Approved Training Hours, job related non-STARS workshop hours, job related conference workshops, or OSPI clock hours.

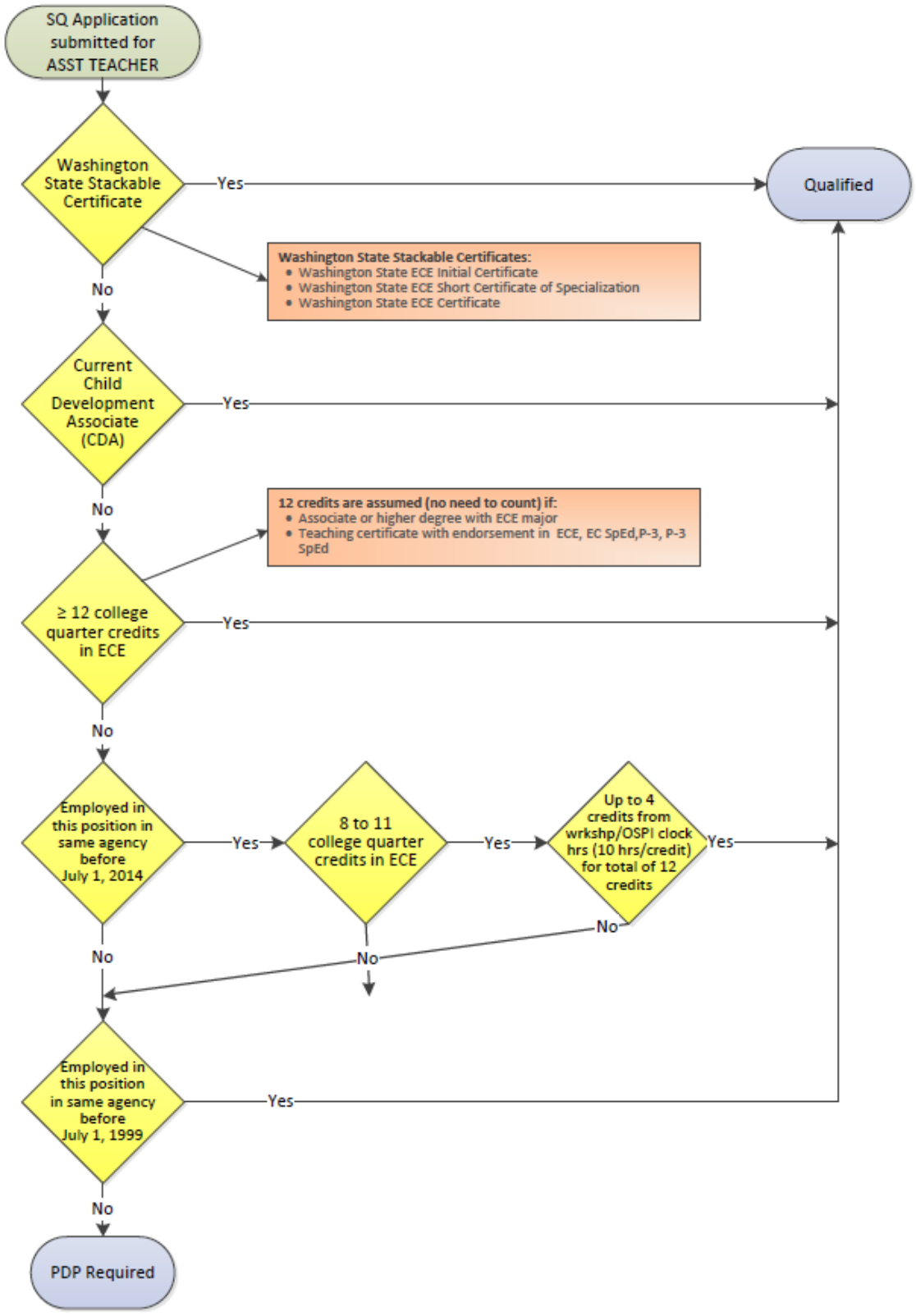
Notes:

- All staff who meet lead teacher qualifications also meet assistant teacher qualifications.
- Credits are counted according to the Evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credit section below.

- 1 semester credit = 1.5 quarter credits

ECEAP Staff Qualification for:

ASSISTANT TEACHER



Revised 7/13/15

Family Support Staff Qualifications

Family Support Staff Role

An ECEAP family support staff provides comprehensive and integrated family support services to enrolled families (Section F). Contractors must ensure that family support staff maintain flexible hours to provide services when parents are available.

A family support staff demonstrates competency to:

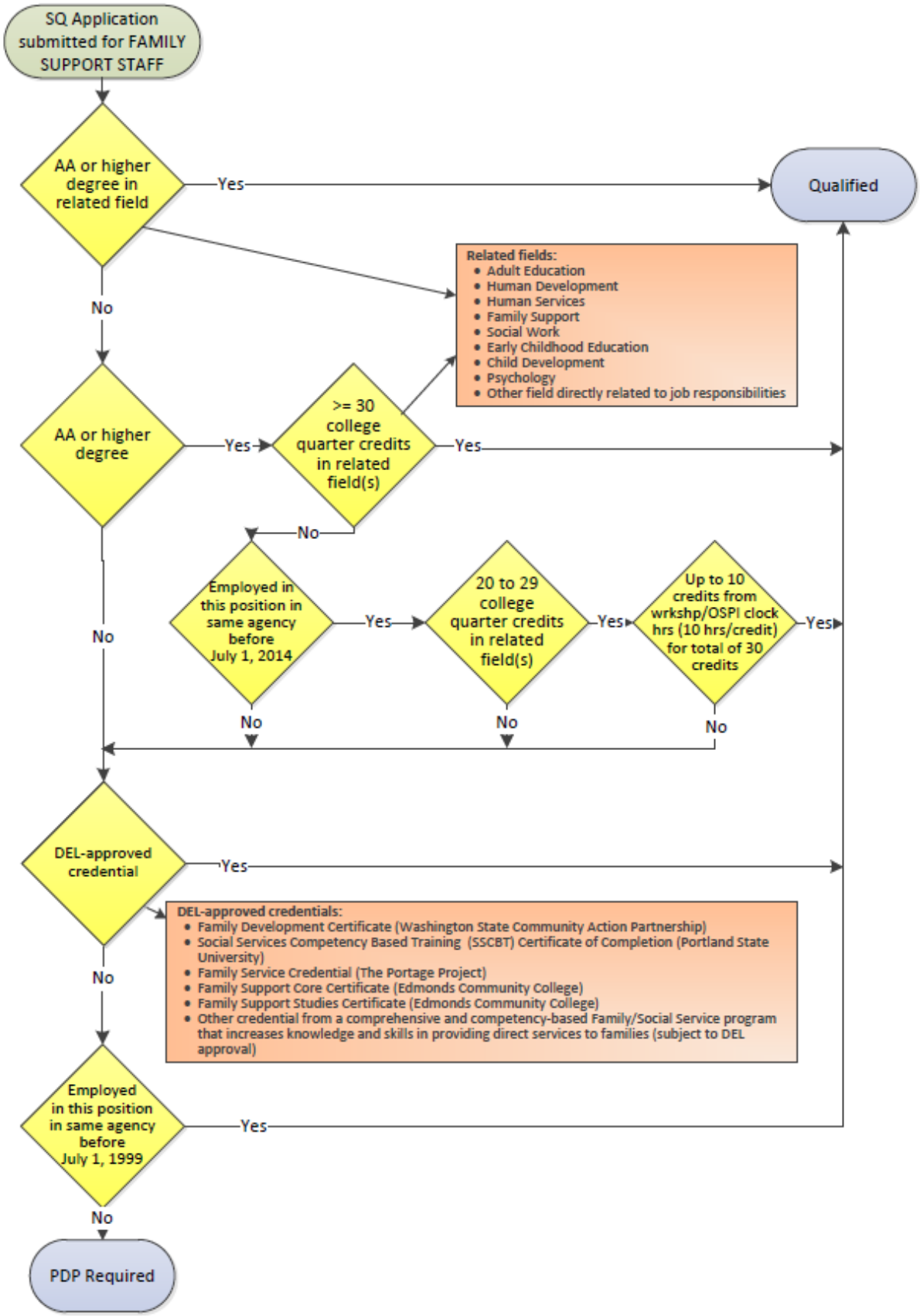
- Build relationships with families.
- Identify family strengths and goals.
- Coordinate services for families.
- Link families to community resources.
- Support family involvement activities.

ECEAP family support staff must have <u>one</u> of the following:

- Employment as ECEAP family support staff in the same agency before July 1, 1999
- An associate or higher degree in adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, early childhood education, child development, psychology or related field directly related to your job responsibilities
- An associate or higher degree with the equivalent of 30 college quarter credits in related fields:
    - Related fields include adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, early childhood education, child development, psychology or related field directly related to your job responsibilities.
    - Credits may be included in the degree or in addition to the degree.
    - Credits are counted according to the ECEAP credit counting handout.
- An associate or higher degree, and employed as ECEAP family support staff before July 1, 2014, with 20 or more college quarter credits in related fields and additional job-related workshop hours for a total equivalent of 30 credits.
    - For this purpose, 10 workshop hours is equivalent to one college quarter credit. Workshop hours can be State-Approved Training Hours, job related non-STARS workshop hours, job related conference workshops, or OSPI clock hours.
- A DEL-approved credential from one of the following comprehensive and competency-based Family/Social Service training program that increases knowledge and skills in providing direct services to families:
    - Family Development Certificate from the Washington State Community Action Partnership.
    - A Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT) Certificate of Completion from Portland State University.
    - A Family Service Credential from The Portage Project.
    - A Family Support Core Certificate from Edmonds Community College.
    - A Family Support Studies Certificate from Edmonds Community College.
    - A credential from a comprehensive and competency-based Family/Social Service program not mentioned above that increases knowledge and skills in providing direct services to families (*subject to DEL approval*).

ECEAP Staff Qualification for:

FAMILY SUPPORT STAFF



Degrees

Associate degree means any “two-year” degree from an accredited institution of higher education of 90 quarter credits or more, including degrees designated as AA, AAS, AAS-T, ATA, or AD.

Bachelor’s degree means any “four-year” from an accredited institution of higher education, including degrees designated as BA, BS, BSc, B.Ed., BSW, etc.

Master’s degree means any advanced degree designated as MA, MS, M.Ed., MSW, etc.

Evaluating Early Childhood Education (ECE) Credit

- **If an ECEAP lead teacher or assistant teacher has an ECE major** on their transcript or diploma, it is not necessary to count individual ECE credits for ECEAP staff qualifications. DEL defines ECE majors as:
    - Early childhood education
    - Early childhood and family studies
    - Human development with a specialization in ECE
    - Children's studies/childhood education
    - Elementary education with one of the following endorsements: Early childhood education, Early childhood special education, P-3, P-3 special education from Washington State, or an equivalent from another state.

- **For ECEAP lead teacher or assistant teachers without an ECE major,** use the chart on the next page to count ECE credits toward their ECEAP qualifications.

- Count quarter credits. 1 semester credit = 1.5 quarter credits

- Count only credits that are:
    - 100 level or above
    - From an accredited institution of higher education
    - Round partial credits up to the nearest whole credit

- Do not count psychology or education courses not mentioned below.

Portion of credit to count	Courses
100%	**ECE or ECED prefixes** or equivalents
100%	**EDUC& 115 Child Development**
100%	**EDUC% 150 Child, Family Community Relationships**
100%	**Birth to age 8 -** Non-ECE courses described in a college catalog as specifically and only about children within the birth to age 8 range (i.e. 0-5, 3-5, 3-8)
100%	**Practicums -** Education practicums/student teaching in preschool, kindergarten, first or second grade
100% 50%	**Cultural diversity -** Non-ECE cultural diversity courses such as Working with Culturally Diverse Families, Multicultural Education, Social Work with Diverse Populations. Count 100% of the first class and 50% of additional courses.
100%	**Child Abuse and Neglect**
100%	**Montessori -** MACTE-accredited or AMI coursework for Preschool and Elementary I credentials. If college credit is not provided for this coursework, calculate college credit at the rate of 10 class/seminar hours or 30 practicum hours per college quarter credit.
50%	**Developmental Psychology**, including Life Span Development, Developmental Theories or similar courses that cover more than ages 0-8
50%	**Developmental Domains -** Courses about a specific developmental domain, covering more than ages 0-8 such as Social and Cognitive Development, Language Development
50%	**Cooperative preschool** parent education, up to a maximum of six credits allowed
50%	**Children's literature**, that covers more than ages 0-8
50%	**Classroom management**, Child Guidance, behavior management (non-ECE)
50%	**Education approaches -** Non-ECE courses in a specific education approach such as Montessori or Waldorf or Reggio Emilia that cover more than ages 0-8.
50%	**Languages** applicable to families in WA: ASL, Spanish, Russian (not Latin, etc)
20%	**Education methods** courses for K-8 or K-12 such as literacy, language arts, reading, math, science, social science, PE, music, art, health education, or general curriculum methods (do not count courses specifically for secondary education)
20%	**Special education** courses covering more than ages 0-8
20%	**Working with Families -** Non-ECE courses informing work with families such as School Home Community Relations, The Family in Society, Psychology of Human Relations, Marriage and Family Life, Sociology of the Family, Family Systems, Parent Education.
20%	**Health -** Non-ECE health courses related to the ECE classroom such as Community Health
2 credits	**Nutrition**
2 credits	**Ethics** course with Philosophy prefix (not business or medical ethics)

Evaluating Family Support Credit

Use this page for ECEAP Family Support Staff for whom is it necessary to count credits in order to determination qualifications for their ECEAP position.

- Count in quarter credits. 1 semester credit = 1.5 quarter credits

- Count only credits that are:
  - 100 level or above
  - From an accredited institution of higher education
  - Round partial credits up to the nearest whole credit

Portion of credit to count	**Courses with titles, prefixes or college catalog descriptions in:**
100%	Adult Education
100%	Child Development
100%	Communication With Families
100%	Counseling
100%	Early Childhood Education, as counted on page above
100%	Family Support
100%	Family Systems/Marriage And Family Life/Sociology Of The Family
100%	Human Development/Lifespan Development/Developmental Psychology
100%	Human Services or equivalent
100%	Mental Health
100%	Psychology
100%	Social Work
100%	Cultural diversity courses such as Working with Culturally Diverse Families, Multicultural Education, Social Work with Diverse Populations.
50%	Cooperative preschool parent education, up to a maximum of six credits allowed
50%	Languages applicable to families in WA: ASL, Spanish, Russian (not Latin, etc)
20%	Job-related communications classes such as Interpersonal Communication, Small Group Communication, Intercultural Communication, Communication and Conflict

Evaluating Workshop Hours for Staff Qualifications

- **This only applies for staff hired into their ECEAP role before July 1, 2014.**
    - **All staff using this option must enter their ECEAP staff qualifications in MERIT by June 30, 2015.**

- Workshop hours can replace up to 1/3 of required credits
    - At the rate of 10 workshop hours to one college quarter credit.
    - But cannot replace a degree requirement.

- Acceptable workshop hours are:
    - State-approved (STARS) training
    - Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) approved clock hours
    - In-service training, conference workshops, or training provided by agencies specializing in professional development.

- Workshop hours must be directly related to the job and/or one or more of these content areas from the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals:
    - Child Growth and Development
    - Learning Environment and Curriculum
    - Child Observation and Assessment
    - Families and Communities
    - Health, Safety and Nutrition
    - Interactions with Children
    - Program Planning and Development
    - Professional Development and Leadership

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What education qualifies me for an education award?

Use the chart below to estimate your education award. If you received any previous award from DEL, the amount of that award will be deducted from the amount earned on this newer chart.

Degree Award — available for highest level of education		
	GED (General Educational Development)	$50
	high school diploma	$50
	associate's degree	$100
	bachelor's degree	$200
	master's degree	$300
	doctoral degree	$400
ECE Major Award — available for up to four verified ECE majors		
	associate's degree with ECE major	$100
	bachelor's degree with ECE major	$100
	master's degree with ECE major	$100
	doctoral degree with ECE major	$100
ECE Certificates & Credentials Award — available for up to three verified ECE certificates & credentials		
	Child Care Basics	$50
	Washington State ECE Initial Certificate	$50
	Washington State ECE Short Certificate of Specialization	$50
	Washington State ECE Certificate	$50
	Child Development Associates (CDA) Credential™	$50
	1 year ECE certificate/diploma (minimum of 45 credits)	$50
	MACTE accredited teacher credential in infant/toddler (I/T)	$50
	MACTE accredited teacher credential in ECE	$50
	Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) diploma in assistants to infancy (A to I): covers birth–3 years of age	$50
	Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) diploma in primary: covers 3–6 years of age	$50
	13 Military Modules	$50
	Other certificate equal to a minimum of 12 ECE credits	$50

2. **What is considered an ECE major for the purpose of Education Awards?**
   If you have one of the following majors displayed on your transcript or diploma, you will not need to enter individual college courses in MERIT.
   - Early childhood education
   - Early childhood and family studies
   - Human development with a specialization in ECE
   - Children's studies/childhood education
   - Elementary education with one of the following endorsements: Early childhood education, Early childhood special education, P-3, P-3 special education

3. **Do I need to enter individual college courses in MERIT?**
   Skip the College Credits section in MERIT on Step 2 of the My Education page if you have:
   - A degree with an ECE major listed in question 2 above.
   - A teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education (P-3) or Early childhood special education (P-3 SpEd)
   - A CDA or family support credential that fully qualifies you for your ECEAP position

   If you are ECEAP Family Support Staff, skip this College Credits section and you have a degree with one of these major displayed on your transcript or diploma: adult education, human development, human services, family support, social work, early childhood education, child development, psychology

   If you don't have a degree or credential mentioned here, enter college courses that specifically qualify you for your ECEAP role. See pages 14 & 15 for which courses to enter.

4. **Do you accept endorsements on teaching certificates from other states?**
   Yes, we accept equivalent endorsements.

5. **What if I've already entered my education into MERIT?**
   - Please follow the steps above to complete the new Staff Qualifications parts of MERIT.
   - This will go quickly, because your education will display as previously entered.

6. **What if MERIT says I'm already "fully qualified" for my ECEAP role?**
   - If Department of Early Learning staff previously reviewed your staff qualifications and determined you are fully qualified, you will see "fully qualified" next to the role on Step 1 of your MERIT Staff Qualifications application.
   - You will still want to add any education not yet in MERIT, so you receive your full education award.
   - You may also want to add more ECEAP or child care job titles and employment.
   - To do this, open the My Education tab and follow instructions.

7. **What if I was hired before July 1, 1999 and am grandfathered into an assistant teacher or family support position?**
   - Complete your staff qualifications application in MERIT and choose the option that states this.
   - You may be eligible for an education award.

8. **What if I was hired before July 1, 2014 and am using workshop hours as part of my ECEAP staff qualifications?**
   - You must complete your staff qualifications application in MERIT by June 30, 2015 for your workshop hours to be counted in place of part of your college credit.
   - After July 1, 2015, our Education Verifiers will no longer count workshop hours toward staff qualifications. In that case, you will have to obtain college credit to complete your qualifications.

9. **Which documents should I gather?**
   - Gather all documentation that demonstrates you are qualified for your ECEAP position, based on the option you selected on the Staff Qualifications application. For example, if you checked "An associate or higher degree with 30 or more college quarter credits in early childhood education," you will gather transcripts that show your final degree award as well as transcripts that show all 30 credits.
   - Gather any additional documentation that backs up your education award described on Step 3 of your application, such as diplomas, certificates and credentials.
   - Do not include anything extra. For example, do not gather workshop certificates unless those workshops were used to qualify you for your ECEAP position.
   - Do not resubmit documentation that was previously verified through MERIT. This will be displayed in your MERIT record.

10. **What if I have college credit or degrees earned outside of the US?**
    - If you earned your degree or college credits outside of the United States, you will need to submit a letter or statement of equivalency for your education to be verified.
    - For more information, see http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/PD/docs/Education%20verification%20-%20Foreign%20degrees%20highschool%20diplomas%20Processing%20FAQ.pdf.

11. **How do I prepare my documentation?**
    - Have all official college or university transcript(s) mailed to you at your home.
    - Copy the front and back sides of the official transcript(s) and all other documents.
    - Write your STARS ID on the top of the copied official transcript(s) and certificates or diplomas and also on the outside of the envelope (next to your name).

12. **How do I mail my documentation?**
    - Place the copies of your official transcript(s) and certificates into one envelope and mail it to:

      Centralia College CFS
      Attn: MERIT
      600 Centralia College Blvd.
      Centralia, WA 98531-4035

13. How do I check the status of my MERIT ECEAP Staff Qualification application?

In MERIT, click on the My Education tab and look at the column titled ECEAP Staff Qualification Status. Here is what each status means:

- **Fully Qualified:** Your application has been reviewed. You are fully qualified for this ECEAP role.

- **On PDP:** You on a Professional Development Plan for this ECEAP role, with a deadline to attain the required qualifications.

- **Need to Submit:** This ECEAP role requires a staff qualification review through MERIT. The next step is to complete the application and click Submit.

- **Pending:** We've received your application and are processing it.

- **Blank:** This job does not require ECEAP Staff Qualifications review.